

lina. To the surprise of the authors of the jole, the President did not hesitate a moment about opening communication with Tillman. He did not "care a rap," he said, who had charge of the bill; what he was after was its passage and he would work with Tillman or anybody else who was in favor of it. His alliance with Tillman aroused great interest and excited hostile comment from the newspapers that took the side of the railway and financial interests which were opposed to the bill, but the President paid no heed to criticism from any quarter, but steadily pursued his course, never for a moment relaxing his pressure on the Senate. Writing to Whitelaw Reid, in London, on March 1, 1906, he said: "I have had some mild troubles in connection with the rate bill. Aldrich did what I have rarely seen him do: he completely lost both his head and his temper. But it won't have any effect in the long run and I shall get just about the bill I have been fighting for."

His faith was justified, for after debating the bill for 70 days, the Senate passed it by a vote of 71 to 3, after it had been amended in a way that did not materially affect its character. Loud assertions were made in the so-called capitalistic press that the President had backed down in order to save himself from defeat, but the truth was that the amendments which were cited as proof of this claim were drawn by the Attorney General and were in accordance with the President's views. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. In his annual message to Congress, December

3, 1906, the President gave this account of the immediate effects of the law :

"The Interstate Commerce law has rather amusingly falsified the predictions, both of those who asserted that it would ruin the railroads and of those who asserted that it did not go far enough and would accomplish nothing.

During the last five months the railroads have shown increased earnings and some of them unusual dividends;

while during the same period the mere taking effect of the law has produced an unprecedented, a hitherto unheard-of, number of voluntary reductions in freights and fares